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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken to explore the relationship between ethnic identity and close friendship communication patterns in Chinese-American college students. Specifically, the study investigated intergenerational differences, proximity to Asian or Caucasian groups, frequency of communication, friendship network size, perceived similarity to Asians and to Caucasians, and degree of intimacy as related to ethnic identity and close friendship. The questionnaire responses of sixty Chinese-American students showed that generation difference was a reliable predictor of ethnic identity for first and second generation subjects and that proximity to Asian or Caucasian groups was a crucial factor that influenced the ethnicity of subjects' close friendship networks. All friendship variables were related on the zero-order correlation analyses. However, no relationship was found between ethnic identity and the ethnicity of subjects' friendship networks. (FL)

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ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CLOSE FRIENDSHIP IN CHINESE-AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CLOSE FRIENDSHIP
IN CHINESE-AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

Every individual has the basic need of relatedness, through socio-cultural bond. It is the sense of "locating" oneself against a larger frame of reference that ethnic identity is held as a primary process found in the core of each individual (Erikson, 1968). Culture provides a framework of values, and ethnic identity is the quality of a cultural self. It is the depth of commitment to certain shared patterns of communication, underlying beliefs, and philosophy of life with a particular cultural group.

Ethnic identity serves as a basic source of and standard for performance. To fully grasp the sense of whether one is an Asian, an American, or both, is the beginning point to the question of: Who am I? To "act like an Asian" or "act like an American" is to behave consistently with certain established cultural rules and norms. However, the question of ethnic identity in the Asian-American is compounded by the fact that the value orientations between the East and West are sharply polarized. For the Asian, emphasis is heavily placed on collectivity, duty and obligation, hierarchy, deference, and dependence. For the Caucasians, emphasis is focused on individualism, equality, rights and privileges, self-reliance, and self-assertion (Connor, 1977). The Asian-Americans that were born in this country often face the dilemma of deciding: Who am I? Am I an Asian? Am I an American? Can I pass myself as both Asian and American? What does it mean to be an Asian-American? How can one reconcile two sets of antithetical values within oneself?

To understand the process of ethnic identity, the variable of close friendship is not to be slighted. Friendship serves as a reference point

for experience and behavior; it enhances and reaffirms one's self-identity. Since ethnic identity is part of one's self-crystallization of identity, the variable of close friendship takes on its particular importance. Wrights (1978), Bailey, Finney and Helm (1975), and Chambliss (1965) suggested that friendship serves as a social validation process of the self. It offers positive appraisal to the individual's perceived self-identity and function as a type of role-support.

The purpose of this paper was to explore the relationship of ethnic identity and close friendship in Chinese-American college students. The analysis includes an investigation of other variables: intergeneration differences, proximity, frequency of communication, network size, perceived similarity, and degree of intimacy as related to ethnic identity and close friendship. The paper is organized as follows: First, literature review leading to the hypotheses of the study; second, the method and the results are described. Lastly, discussion and implications for future research in the area of ethnic identity and cross-cultural friendship are presented.

Ethnic Identity and Close Friendship

A qualitative study was conducted on 30 Chinese-American college students prior to the present study. The purpose of the first study was to generate a descriptive framework of how these students use "talk" as a cultural resource in both family and peer-group interactions. Interestingly, throughout these semi-structured interviews, the variables of ethnic identity and close friendship appear to be the major concern of this particular group of volunteer subjects.

The following direct quotations could serve as examples of some typical comments made by these students:

> Well, there are so many times I look into the mirror, and I ask myself: Who am I? You are not Chinese, because you do not think Chinese; you are not American because you do not look like an American. Who am I? I don't know. I really want to find out.
>
> I definitely see myself as Chinese, all my close friends are Chinese. I feel much more relaxed talking to a Chinese than an American. I feel much more at home with them. My family passes on many of the traditional Chinese values and customs, and my parents constantly remind me, you are a Chinese, you should feel proud to be a Chinese.
>
> All my life, I saw myself as an American, I was born here, raised here. I feel American, I think like an American.
>
> I cannot relate to any old-country traditional Chinese values. I do not read, write, or speak Chinese. I attend an all-white high school, live in an all-white neighborhood. I am an American, all my friends are Americans. I do not mix well with other Chinese.
>
> I definitely communicate differently with both sets of friends. With American friends, we laugh and joke a lot, we talk about issues, politics, sports; with my Chinese friends, we talk more about feelings, things that are deep inside us. I feel comfortable communicating with both groups. I can relate myself well with both sets of cultural values. I see myself as both an Asian and an American.

It seems that consistently, whenever the topic of ethnic identity was brought up, subjects would simultaneously mention the variable of friendship network as a type of identity-support. Therefore, drawing upon the observations from these taped-interviews it was hypothesized that: (1) subjects who identify themselves mainly with Chinese cultural values would have a predominant Asian friendship network; (2) subjects who identify themselves mainly with American cultural values (i.e., Caucasian white middle-class values) would have a predominant Caucasian friendship network; and (3)

subjects who identify themselves with both Chinese and American cultural values would have a bicultural friendship network.

Generation, Ethnic Identity, and Close Friendship

Closely related to the central focus of this paper was a line of research conducted by Masuda, Matsumoto, Meredith, and Hasegawa (1970, 1970, and 1973). An Ethnic Identity Questionnaire (EIQ) was constructed and applied to three generations of Japanese-Americans in Seattle, Washington.

Results of the first study (Masuda, Matsumoto, and Meredith, 1970) indicated a gradual erosion of ethnicity towards ancestral culture from the 1st to the 3rd generation Japanese-Americans. Sex was not a significant factor in ethnic identity, but age, education, socio-economic status, and religion were statistically significant.

A second study conducted by the same researchers compared the magnitude of ethnic identity of the Seattle sample to that of Honolulu, Hawaii. Results showed that the Honolulu sample was perceived to be ethnically less Japanese-oriented than their Seattle counterparts. This was explained in terms of greater political and economic power and social interrelationships on the Honolulu sample. Again, the 1st generation Japanese immigrants scored higher on the EIQ than the 2nd and 3rd generation Japanese-Americans, reflecting the impact of generation on the variable of ethnic identity.

A third study (Masuda, Hasegawa, and Matsumoto, 1973) compared these two samples with sample in Tachikawa, Japan. Results indicated that attenuation of cultural attitudes and beliefs strongly correlated with generation differences. Finally, Connor (1977) reported similar findings when surveying three generations of Japanese-Americans in Sacramento, California: the retention

of Japanese cultural beliefs in the 1st generation, and their gradual attrition in the 2nd and 3rd generations.

Based on the investigation of these studies, it was hypothesized that. (1) 1st generation Chinese-Americans mainly identify themeslves with traditional Chinese values; (2) 2nd generation Chinese-American maintain a bicultural identity, retaining their ancestral cultural beliefs, while at the same time adapting to an American identity; and (3) 3rd generation Chinese-Americans mainly identify themselves with American cultural values. It was further hypothesized that: (1) 1st generation subjects would have a predominant Asian friendship network; (2) 2nd generation subjects would have a bicultural friendship network; and (3) 3rd generation subjects would have a predominant Caucasian friendship network.

Proximity and Close Friendship

Besides the variables of ethnic identity and generation differences, it seems that proximity would also have a great influence on the formation of close friendship among the subjects.

In the qualitative study, subjects had repeatedly reported the importance of ethnic make-up in their high schools and their neighborhoods as their main sources of "opportunities" to make close friends with either Asian-Americans or Caucasians. Festinger, Schechter, and Back (1950) studied the effect of proximity on friendship formation, and discovered a striking relationship between physical and functional distance and sociometric choice. Byrne (1961) investigated the influence of propinquity on classroom friendship formation, and found that the intensity of relationships between classmates was a direct function of proximity and frequency of interaction.

Explaining friendship in terms of social exchange theory, Berscheid and Walster (1969) concluded that people who were in closer contact with each other had greater opportunities to communicate, therefore it cost them less effort and time to acquire information about each other. Finally, Menne and Sinnett (1971), Schutte and Light (1978) reported similar findings that proximity was one of the key factors in friendship formation either in residence halls or in an organization setting.

Drawing on the reasoning by previous investigators, it was hypothesized that: there should be a relationship between subjects' close friendship network to that of high school attended and residential area. Subjects who attended an all-white high school, lived in an all-white neighborhood, would have a predominant Caucasian friendship network. Subjects who attended an Asian predominant high school, lived in an Asian predominant neighborhood would have a mainly Asian friendship network. The former should have more opportunities to communicate with Caucasians, while the latter have more chances to come in close contact with other Asian-Americans.

Frequency of Communication, Network Size, and Close Friendship

Once friendship is firmly established and mutual trust has evolved, proximity may not be a key factor but the frequency of interaction between close friends is still an important variable in the theory of friendship attraction. According to Wright (1978), close friends often continued to spend time together even if it entails "arranging" or inconvenience.

Festinger, Schechter, and Back (1950), Homans (1950), Bovard (1956), Chambliss (1965) had documented extensively the importance of frequency of communication to that of liking and intimacy in close friendship. After

reviewing volumes of studies in friendship formation, Lott and Lott (1965) concluded that interpersonal attraction was a positive function of frequency of interaction.

Again, from the perspective of social exchange theory, frequency of communication could be viewed as opportunities for mutual positive reinforcements and appraisals between close friends. The more we communicate with our close friends, the more we increase our knowledge and trust in them, the more intimate we feel with them. It was hypothesized in this study that: A positive relationship exists between frequency of communication and degree of intimacy between one's self and close friends.

In addition, to the extent that large amounts of time and energy were needed to maintain any intimate relationship (Rake, 1970; Suttles, 1970; and Kurth, 1970) it would appear that the more close friends one has, the less time and energy one could allot to each close friend and the less intimate one is to each close friend. Therefore, it was hypothesized that: (1) a negative relationship exists between frequency of communication and network size; and (2) a negative relationship exists between network size and degree of intimacy between one's self and close friends.

Perceived Similarity and Close Friendship

It was suggested that individuals, in the process of friendship formation, actively sought anchoring points of similarity (Fiebert and Fiebert, 1969). Perceived similarity with another person was rewarding in terms of congruent belief and stable prediction of each other's attitudes and behaviors. The more we could predict about another person's behavior, the more "safe" and intimate we feel towards that person.

Santee and Jackson (1978), Veitch and Piccione (1978) concluded that: similar others, in general, were seen as behaving with better intentions, their action was perceived as more justified and they were rated more positively than dissimilar others. Perceived similarity induces positive sentiments between close friends, and leads to a greater degree of intimacy between the friendship pair. It was hypothesized that: a positive relationship exists between degree of perceived similarity and degree of intimacy between one's self and close friends.

Further, in terms of cross-cultural attraction theory, Byrne and Wong (1962) found that ethnicity was the major factor that influences attitudinal similarity and cross-cultural relationships. Persons belonging to similar ethnic backgrounds were perceived to be more similar to one's self, therefore, being appraised more positively than persons belonging to different ethnic groups.

Along the same line of research, studies by Goebel and Cole (1975), Jones and Diener (1976), Allen (1976), Schofield and Sagar (1977), and Stephan (1977) concluded that ethnic similarity was positively correlated to interpersonal liking and intimacy. Persons belonging to similar ethnic background because of congruent cultural beliefs and values, possess a stronger degree of intimacy for each other than friends belonging to different ethnic groups. Thus it was hypothesized that: (1) subjects who have a predominant Asian friendship network would perceive themselves as more similar to their close friends than subjects who have a predominant Caucasian friendship network; and (2) subjects who have a predominant Asian friendship network would express a greater degree of intimacy with their

close friends than subjects with Caucasian friendship network.

Degree of Intimacy and Close Friendship

According to Berger and Calabrese (1975) verbal self-disclosure increased prediction and reduced uncertainty between friends; therefore resulting in an increased degree of closeness between the friendship pair.

Simmel (1950), Naegele (1958), Williams (1959), Suttles (1970), Weinberg (1970), and Kurth (1970) concurred that degree of intimacy and self-disclosure were reciprocal processes in close friendship interaction. It is through intimate verbal conversation between close friends that mutual trust and positive sentiments were established. Intimacy in this study was conceptualized as how intimate the conversation was between one's self and close friends. Based on the explanations on previous pages it was hypothesized that: (1) a positive correlation exists between frequency of communication, degree of perceived similarity, and degree of intimacy between one's self and close friends; and (2) a negative correlation exists between network size and degree of intimacy.

Hypotheses

H_1 : Subjects who identify themselves mainly with Chinese culture would have a predominant Asian friendship network; subjects who identify themselves with both cultures would have a bicultural friendship network; and subjects who identify themselves with American culture would have a predominant Caucasian friendship network.

H_2 : 1st generation subjects would mainly identify themselves with Chinese cultural values; 2nd generation subjects would identify themselves with both cultures; and 3rd generation subjects would mainly identify themselves with American culture.

H_3 : 1st generation subjects would maintain close friendship contact with Asians; 2nd generation subjects would maintain a bicultural friendship network; and 3rd generation subjects would maintain close friendship contact with Caucasians.

H_4 : Subjects who attended an all-white high school and lived in an all-white residential neighborhood would have a predominant Caucasian friendship network; subjects who attended an Asian predominant high school and lived in an Asian predominant neighborhood would have a mainly Asian friendship network.

H_5 : A positive correlation exists between frequency of communication, degree of perceived similarity, and degree of intimacy between one's self and close friends.

H_6 : A negative correlation exists between frequency of communication and network size, and network size and degree of intimacy between one's self and close friends.

H_7 : A greater degree of perceived similarity is to be found between subjects with Asian friendship network than subjects with Caucasian friendship network.

H_8 : A greater degree of intimacy is to be found between subjects with Asian friendship network then subjects with Caucasian friendship network.

METHOD

Subject

A final sample of 60 students (27 males, 33 females) participated in the study. Participation was voluntary, and only Chinese-American students who were U.S. residents or citizens were eligible. The mean age in the sample was 21.48 (SD = 0.50). Subjects were evenly distributed according to their academic year. More than half of the subjects (53.3%) responded that they were bilingual, i.e., fluent in both the Chinese and English language, while 46.7% of the subjects responded they were monolingual, i.e., fluent only in the English language.

Procedures

A list of Chinese-American's names and addresses was obtained from the University Office of Minority Affairs, Asian-American Division. Altogether

200 names were randomly picked from the list and a 10-page self-administered questionnaire was mailed to each individual subject. A telephone follow-up to encourage each subject to mail back the survey was conducted, and the total return rate was 30%. The low return rate could be due to the lengthy questionnaire; although the entire survey took less than 30 minutes to fill out. Another explanation could be that most Chinese-American students were reluctant to disclose information concerning the self or close friends because they considered both topics as something private and personal. Subject's confidentiality was assured on the cover letter.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was divided into three parts: (1) Basic demographic information; (2) a 30-item Ethnic Identity Questionnaire (EIQ) generated and modified from Connor's (1977) EIQ and the Contrasting Values Opinion Survey; and (3) a 4-item Friendship Communication Questionnaire (FCQ) was developed. On the EIQ, half of the questions measured the Chinese-oriented identity, i.e., measuring the Chinese cultural orientation, belief system, and attitudinal dimension of the subjects; the other half measured the American-oriented identity. On the FCQ subjects were asked to list the initials of all the persons whom they considered to be their close friends, and they had the options of listing 1 close friend to 10 close friends. The definition of close friendship was purposely left open for the respondents to decide for themselves. A set of 4 questions in terms of friend's ethnic identity, frequency of communication, degree of perceived similarity and degree of intimacy was asked after the listing of each close friend's initials.

Ethnic Identity: This variable was operationalized as to how subjects identified themselves on the 30-item EIQ. There were 15 items that measured the Chinese cultural identity, 15 items that measured the American identity and a combined 15 items that measured the subjects bicultural identity. For example, some of the items were: "Human relationships are generally more comfortable and warm in the Chinese community than other American communities"; "I feel much more relaxed going out on a date with Caucasians than Asians"; and "I feel inter-racial marriages between Asians and Caucasians should be greatly encouraged."

Subjects were asked to circle the most appropriate response that accurately reflected their opinion on a Likert-type 7-point scale from "1" meaning "strongly disagree" to "7" meaning "strongly agree." When subjects scored high on the Chinese-oriented items (> 60 to 105) and scored low on the American-oriented items (< 60) they were classified as the Chinese-identity group. Vice versa, when subjects scored low on the Chinese-oriented items and scored high on the American-oriented items, they were classified as the American-identity group. Those who scored high on the designated bicultural-items (> 60), were classified as the bicultural-identity group. Those who scored low on both the Chinese and American-oriented items (< 60) were classified as the marginal group, i.e., neither identify themselves with the Chinese nor American culture.

Generation: Subjects were asked to respond to the question: "What generation are you?" The choices were: 1st generation U.S. immigrant, 2nd generation U.S. born, 3rd generation (parents U.S. born), or 4th generation (grandparents U.S. born).

Proximity: Subjects were asked to respond to the following questions: "Were the students in your high school mainly Caucasians?" "If no, did you attend an Asian predominant high school" and "Is your permanent residence located in a mainly Caucasian neighborhood?" "If no, do you live in an Asian predominant neighborhood?"

Frequency of Communication: This variable was operationalized as the number of times subject communicated to each close friend within a one-month period. Subjects were asked: "In general, how frequently do you communicate with him/her?" The choices were: once/day, more than once/week, once/week, more than once/month, once/month or less. The mean across the subjects close friendships was used as a global frequency measure.

Network Size: This variable was operationalized as the number of close friends designated by the subject. The sex of each close friend was also recorded.

Ethnicity of Friendship Network: Subjects were asked to check each individual friend's ethnic background as: "Asian," "Caucasian," or "Other," and this was further coded as "Black," "Chicano/Mexican-American," or "Native American." Subjects were perceived to have a predominant Asian friendship network when over 0.5 of the network size consisted of Asian friends; subjects were perceived to have a predominant Caucasian friendship network when over 0.5 of the network size consisted of Caucasian friends. If both Asian or Caucasian friends were equal 0.5, or their combination were greater than 0.5 of the network size, subjects had a bicultural friendship network.

Ethnic Similarity: This variable was operationalized as close friends belonging to similar ethnic background as the subjects, i.e., Asian-American.

Perceived Similarity: This variable was operationalized as the overall level of perceived similarity between subject and each close friend. The subject was asked: "In general, how similar do you perceive yourself to be with this particular close friend?" Response was given on a 7-point scale bounded at the end points with the phrases "very different" to "very similar." The mean of the subject's close friendships was used as a global perceived similarity measure

Intimacy: This variable was operationalized as how personal the conversation was between subject and each close friend. Subjects were asked: "When you communicate with this particular close friend, how intimate or personal is your conversation?" This was bounded by a 7-point scale from "not intimate" to "very intimate." The mean across the subject's close friendships was used as a global degree of intimacy measure.

RESULTS

Hypotheses Between Generation, Ethnic Identity and Close Friendship

There were 33.3% 1st generation subjects responded to the survey, followed by 31.7% 2nd generation, 30.0% 3rd generation, and 5.0% 4th generation subjects. Over half of the subjects (51.7%) belonged to the bicultural group; while 26.7% of the subjects identified themselves mainly with the Chinese culture, and only 10.0% subjects identified themselves with the American culture.

As for the subject's friendship network, 36.7% subjects had a predominant Asian friendship network, closely followed by 35.0% subjects with a predominant Caucasian friendship network, and 26.7% subjects had a bicultural friendship network. The mean of the number of male friends for all subjects was 4.47, and the mean of female friends was 3.37. Overall, subjects had an average of 4 close friends. No subjects had any problem listing at least 1 close friend.

The x^2 test between ethnic identity and friendship network was statistically significant ($x^2 = 16.93$; $df = 9$; $p < 0.05$). However, the cross-tabulation between the 4 ethnic identity groups to that of 4 friendship network groups was not in the hypothesized direction.

Rather, 43.8% subjects who belonged to the Chinese-identity group had a predominant Caucasian friendship network; as compared to 37.5% Chinese-identity subjects who had an Asian friendship network. Of the 10% subjects who belonged to the American-identity group more than half of the subjects had an Asian friendship network, while only 16.7% subjects had a predominant Caucasian friendship network. However, because of the small number of subjects in this group, any further interpretation should be viewed with caution.

As for the bicultural-identity group, an equal number of subjects (35.5%) had an Asian friendship network and a Caucasian friendship network. There were 29.0% subjects who maintained bicultural friendship network. Thus, none of the hypotheses between ethnic identity and the types of friendship network were supported.

Interestingly, for the male subjects in this sample, only 7.4% subjects identified themselves with the Chinese culture; while there were 42.2% females

identified themselves strongly with the Chinese culture. There were more male subjects (18.5%) who identified themselves with the American culture than the female subjects (3.0%). It seems that a greater number of females retained and internalized the Chinese cultural values and beliefs than their male counterparts.

While sex was a significant factor in subjects' ethnic identification process ($x^2 = 11.62$; df = 3; $p < 0.05$), it was not significant in terms of subjects' cross-cultural friendship preference ($x^2 = 1.87$, ns). Also contrary to most cross-cultural research findings (Pool, 1965; Kim, 1977) language was not a significant factor in both subjects' ethnic identity ($x^2 = 2.24$, ns) and close friendship formation ($x^2 = 3.43$, ns). Subjects who were bilingual (speak and understand both the Chinese and English language) did not necessarily maintain a Chinese ethnic identity or Asian friendship network as compared to subjects who were monolingual (speak and understand only the English language).

The x^2 test between intergeneration differences and ethnic identity was statistically significant ($x^2 = 16.61$; df = 9; $p < 0.05$). The hypotheses of the 1st generation mainly identified themselves with Chinese cultural values, and 2nd generation mainly identified themselves with both sets of cultural values were confirmed. However, the hypothesis concerning the 3rd generation subjects mainly identified themselves with American culture was not supported. An overwhelming 77.8% subjects identified themselves with a bicultural identity, and only 5.6% subjects identified themselves with the American culture. Of particular interest to note was that out of the 4th generation respondents, two-thirds of the subjects maintained

a Chinese cultural identity, and only one-third of the subjects identified themselves mainly with American culture. The x^2 test between generation differences and ethnicity of friendship network was statistically nonsignificant ($x^2 = 7.07$, ns). Only the 3rd generation with a predominant Caucasian friendship network was in the hypothesized direction.

Hypotheses Between Proximity and Ethnicity of Friendship Network

It was hypothesized that proximity was an important variable in terms of subject's ethnic friendship contacts. The hypothesis concerning subjects' high school attendance to that of ethnicity of friendship network was confirmed ($x^2 = 20.08$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.001$). The expectation that subjects' residential area was related to the ethnicity of close friendships was also supported ($x^2 = 17.50$; $df = 3$; $p < 0.001$).

Over half of the subjects (64.3%) who attended an all-white high school had a predominant Caucasian friendship network, while 50.0% subjects who attended an Asian predominant high school had mainly close Asian friends. Also, those who lived in a white neighborhood (57.6%) had mainly Caucasian friends; and those who lived in an Asian predominant neighborhood had mainly Asian friends.

Hypotheses Between Frequency of Communication, Network Size, Perceived Similarity, and Degree of Intimacy

Zero-order Pearson correlation and second-order partial correlation were performed on a group basis on these four friendship variables. All hypotheses were supported on the zero-order correlation. The global frequency of communication across subjects and close friends was positively correlated with degree of intimacy ($r = 0.76$; $p < 0.001$). The more times subjects

communicated to their close friends the more personal and intimate was their conversation. Network size was negatively correlated with degree of intimacy ($r = -0.56$; $p < 0.001$). The larger the network size, the less intimate was the conversation between subjects with their close friends. Degree of perceived similarity was strongly correlated with degree of intimacy between subjects and close friends ($r = 0.88$; $p < 0.001$). The more similar the subjects perceived their friends to be the more personal were their conversations.

For the findings on partial correlation, all variables were strongly correlated, except for the variable of network size. Frequency of communication was related to degree of intimacy ($r = 0.63$; $p < 0.001$), when controlled out network size and perceived similarity. Perceived similarity was strongly correlated to degree of intimacy ($r = 0.82$; $p < 0.001$) with frequency of communication and network size partialled out. However, network size was unrelated to degree of intimacy ($r = -0.15$, ns), when both frequency of communication and perceived similarity were controlled, the relationship was in the hypothesized direction.

Hypotheses Between Ethnicity of Friendship Network, Perceived Similarity, and Degree of Intimacy

A t-test was performed to test any significant difference between subjects with Asian network friends versus subjects with Caucasian network

friends to the variable of perceived similarity. Statistical result yielded no significance (t = 0.56, ns). Subjects with Caucasian friends did not perceive their friends as more dissimilar ($\bar{x}$ = 4.25, SD = 1.94) than subjects with Asian friends ($\bar{x}$ = 4.59, SD = 1.84).

The same test was applied to the two groups in terms of degree of intimacy between subjects and friends. Again, this hypothesis was not supported (t = 1.53, ns). Subjects who had a Caucasian friendship network possessed similar degree of intimacy ($\bar{x}$ = 5.82, SD = 2.22) with their close friends than subjects who had close Asian friends ($\bar{x}$ = 4.90, SD = 1.71).

DISCUSSION

Overall, a number of hypotheses in this study were confirmed. It seems intergeneration difference between 1st and 2nd generation subjects was a reliable predictor of how subjects identified themselves in terms of cultural norms and values.

While the 1st generation Chinese-American mainly identified themselves with the Chinese culture, the 2nd generation had successfully adapted and internalized both sets of cultural orientations. The striking percentage of 3rd generation students also identified themselves with both sets of cultural values and beliefs indicated the retention of ancestral culture was important for this particular ethnic group. Interestingly, as we look at the finding for the 4th generation subjects, it seems that ethnic identification is a cyclical process, rather than a linear assimilation trend for this sample. The 4th generation seems to have searched back for their "roots," rather than assimilated themselves towards the dominant white culture.

In terms of sex differences in ethnic identity formation, the results of this study contrasted with the previous studies conducted by Masuda, Matsumoto, and Meredith (1970). Sex was a significant factor in terms of ethnic identity patterns between male and female subjects. Female subjects were more ethnically-oriented towards their ancestral culture than the male subjects; while male subjects manifested a greater degree of adaptability towards the white culture. However, in terms of cross-cultural friendship preference there was no significant differences between the two groups. Females had as many close Caucasian friends as the male subjects; similarly, the males had the same amount of close Asian friends as the female subjects.

Contrary to our hypothesis, ethnic identity was not a reliable predictor for subjects' close friendship preference. Rather, results indicated that the Chinese-identity group had a predominant Caucasian friendship network, and the American-identity group had a predominant Asian friendship network. One explanation could be that friendship is a universal phenomenon which transcends all cultural boundaries. Ethnic identity may be important at the initial stage of friendship, but once the friendship pair has firmly developed their relationship ethnicity does not play as significant a role as some other friendship attraction variables.

This explanation could be further supported by the nonsignificant differences found between the Asian friendship group and Caucasian friendship group in relation to degree of perceived similarity and intimacy. Subjects who had a Caucasian friendship network did not perceive their friends as more dissimilar than subjects who had a predominant Asian friendship network.

Also, both groups expressed a similar degree of intimacy for their close friends. These findings were in direct contrast with studies by Byrne and Wong (1962), Goebel and Cole (1975), Allen (1976), and Shofield and Sagar (1977) where ethnicity was an important variable in terms of cross-cultural attraction. However, since the instrumentation for measuring interpersonal attraction across ethnic groups varied from one study to another comparison of results from this study to previous studies could result in overgeneralization.

Another interpretation for the lack of relationship between subject's ethnic identity and friendship network could be: respondents in this survey are mainly a bicultural group of subjects. Cognitively these subjects could identify themselves strongly with one set of cultural values, while socially they were motivated and influenced by their surroundings to pursue a particular set of close friends. Judging by the high percentages of subjects (51.7%) who actually belonged to the bicultural-identity group, and the low percentage respondents who belonged either to the Chinese (26.7%) or American-identity group (10%) this observation is a viable explanation.

The reasons that cause this sample bias may be: First, students who strongly identified themselves with the traditional Chinese cultural values, and retained the more inner-directed Chinese cultural traits, were not encouraged to disclose information of a personal nature. Second, students who identified themselves mainly with the American culture perceived themselves purely as an "American" therefore were not responsive to the label "Chinese-American."

However, if ethnic identity was not an important variable in subjects' close friendship contact, proximity was a decisive factor that influenced the ethnicity of subjects' friendship network. Both subjects' high school surrounding and residential area highly correlated with the types of close friends they had. Again, proximity is probably very important at the early stage of friendship development, when it offers the opportunity for subjects to interact with either Caucasian or Asian friends.

Hypotheses on all other friendship variables—proximity, network size, frequency of communication, degree of perceived similarity, and intimacy—were supported on the zero-order correlation analyses. However, network size and degree of intimacy were not supported on the partial-order correlation. This could be interpreted in two ways: First, since the mean number of close friends was small enough ($\bar{x} = 4$), subjects could allocate equal amount of time and attention for each close friends. Second, even for subjects with a large friendship network, they could have replaced the quantity of time spent together with the quality of interaction needed for such close friends during their infrequent intimate conversation.

The results of this study have at least three implications for future research in the area of ethnic identity and cross-cultural friendship. First, ethnic identification is a cyclical process along the line of generation differences; the melting pot theory does not apply to this particular ethnic group. Cultural heritage is preserved through the return of the 4th generation subjects back to the ancestral culture. Future studies should be conducted on different ethnic groups so that comparison of results can be made.

In the context of close friendship formation, the key interest to note is: Friendship is a universal phenomenon that transcends all cultural barriers. Future research should examine precisely the different developmental stages of cross-cultural friendship attraction. At what point is ethnicity an important factor in cross-cultural relationship? Is perceived complementarity a better predictor than perceived similarity at the initial stage of cross-cultural friendship formation? What kinds of gratifications or communication satisfactions can be derived from cross-cultural interaction? Does heterogeneous cross-ethnic friendship network serve different functions than homogeneous friendship network? In terms of co-orientation model, how do close friends of the subject perceive him/her in terms of ethnic identity and friendship communication variables?

Second, although the results between ethnic identity and friendship network ended in the reverse direction, some pressing research questions could be asked. Do subjects who identified themselves with the Chinese culture, but maintained a Caucasian friendship network experience any type of identity conflict? Likewise, do subjects who identified themselves mainly with the American culture but maintained an Asian friendship network go through any degree of role dissonance? Is there a higher level of anxiety or stress in these two groups than groups who behave consistently with one set of cultural patterns and maintain close friendship ties accordingly to their ethnic identity? The set of questions should be equally applicable to findings in other ethnic groups.

Third, proximity as a crucial variable in influencing the ethnicity of subjects friendship network is a major finding in this study. Future work

should be devoted to further assessing the attitudinal dimensions of subjects who maintained a Caucasian friendship network, subjects who maintained an Asian friendship network, and subjecs who interacted with a bicultural friendship network. What are the attitudinal differences between these three groups of subjects? Do they have different communication codes to govern and guide their behaviors? What kinds of impact do close friendship networks have on the interactional styles of these subjects? Will similar findings be observed on the friendship communication variables of other ethnic groups?

This paper is an exploratory study on the relationship between ethnic identity and close friendship communication patterns in Chinese-American students. There are still many questions remained unanswered; many facets of the relationship await to be explored. The author hopes that this paper has advanced our understanding towards the dynamics of cross-cultural friendship attraction, and will stimulate further research into this specific area. The contemporary issue of ethnicity should continue to be both a challenge and an opportunity to society, and to the ethnic groups themselves.

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